

## **The Bangladesh experience: A developing country's perspective on child drowning prevention**

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### **Summary**

Bangladesh has one of the world's highest child drowning rates, (28.2/100,000 children 0-17 years). Approximately 17,000 children fatally drown each year, including (12,000) children aged 0-4 years. Most of the drownings occur in ponds, wells and other common water hazards at or within 100 meters of the child's home.

The Center for Injury Prevention Research, Bangladesh and partners created a comprehensive water safety program among 600,000 rural villagers, including over 236,000 children. Interventions are keyed to the child's age. For children under four, interventions are increase adult supervision and decrease water hazards in, at and near the home. For children over four, survival swimming is taught.

The program allows water safety education and training in a poor country lacking infrastructure normally associated with water safety such as swimming pools, life-guards and professional instructors. Key features include use of local resources, reliance on local community participation, and the creation of a heightened culture of water safety.

The results of the mid-term review conducted in July 2007 are presented. The review examines the impact of the program after two years of operation. It provides evidence on the feasibility of large-scale interventions that prevent child drownings in a sustainable and cost-effective manner in developing countries.

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### **Annexes**



Teaching "Survival Swimming" in rural Bangladesh.